

ADDICTIVE INTERNET USE AND OTHER PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Keywords: substance use; problematic internet use; social support

Nowadays children spend 2-4 hours a day in front of the internet (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011). It has a major role in their life and affects their social relationships and physical and mental health. Problematic internet use (PIU) was correlated in some researches with substance use (Lee, Han, Kim, & Renshaw, 2013), the amount of perceived stress (Velezmoro, Lacefield, & Roberti, 2010) and deteriorated social relationship with the parents (Lin & Tsai, 2002) as well.

The aim of our study was to detect groups at special risk for higher level of internet use. Our goal was to find a correlation with the PIU, substance use and psychosocial factors. The instruments contained the PIU Questionnaire, the Perceived Stress Scale, the Need to Belong Scale, the UCLA Loneliness Scale, the Shyness Scale, questions about the perceived support from the parents/friends, and substance use habits. The questionnaire was an online, anonymous test. 381 Hungarian girls answered the questions. We skipped the boys' data because they represent only 10% of all responders.

Using cluster analysis we circumscribed differences between 'normal' and 'problematic/risky' users. According to our data, the 'normal users' are satisfied with their life and they receive social support from both parents. Other preventive factors include a good social relationship with peers and a high level of sensation seeking. On the contrary, the 'problematic/risky users' feel lonely and tend to report a higher level of need to belong but they are too shy to find more friends. They report high levels of stress, use the internet regularly and the use is correlated with the subscales of the PIU Questionnaire. This pattern of use is more frequent among the youngsters ($\lambda^2(1)=4.376$; $p<0.05$). In contrast with previous studies, substance use was not correlated with PIU, but our results show 'normal users' smoke ($\lambda^2(2)=7.574$; $p<0.05$) and drink alcohol ($\lambda^2(2)=17.814$; $p<0.01$) more often than the other group.

These findings suggest that PIU may be connected with higher level of perceived stress and less perceived support. Good relationships can be a proactive factor against PIU. On the other hand, our findings also suggest that those who may be addictive of internet use are less likely to use harmful substances, particularly the social ones.

It is important to know who are at a higher risk to use the internet as a compensation tool in order to create the most effective intervention and prevention as well. The role of the parents and teachers is undoubted. They can pay attention to the amount and the quality of the children's internet use and they should explain the optimal use of web pages and the dangers as well.